

Kenyan hospitality and travel industries



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The Republic of Kenya is located along the Equator of the eastern side of Africa, bordering the countries of Somalia, Uganda, Ethiopia and Tanzania. The country covers an area of 582, 264 km² and houses approximately 28.8 million people and growing at a rate of 1.6% annually. The climate has a tropical origin which tourists can experience sunshine all year round, however the temperature may differ throughout the country for example warm & humid at the coast, cool & humid at central high lands and hot & dry in the north and east. Rain on the other hand is seasonal for which the heaviest occur during the months of April to June.

Kenya is a country rich in culture which gives home to a number of different tribes, religions and approximately 45 different ethnic groups. Some of these larger populated ethnic and religious groups include: Kikuyu 22%, Luhya 14% and Protestant 45%, Roman Catholic 33%, Indigenous beliefs 10% and Muslim 10% respectively. (About.com)

The native language of Kenya is Swahili which is also known as Kiswahili which is widely spoken among natives however English is becoming the official language of Kenya.

This cosmopolitan country has a number of different amenities to bring to the tourism arena. With tourism being one of the main financial drivers of Kenya's economy, they engaged in the following types of tourism which are: Domestic, Culture, Business and Community and Eco Tourism.

This type of tourism helps in a number of different ways. Firstly, it helps to educate the natives about their country and what it has to offer. Secondly, it gets them more involved in the tourism sector. Domestic tourism also helps

in balancing off the tourism industry in low period of nation and international guest and tourist arrival.

Kenya's tourism industry is closely bonded to environment, culture and the community, wildlife in relation to eco tourism in particular is one of the top tourist drivers. Safaris, national parks and forests, show the countless species of Flora and Fauna that can be found throughout the country. Tourist can also experience true tribal life through the community national parks where rich Kenyan culture is displayed together with tours and hikes through deserts, mountains rainforests, beaches etc.

BUSINESS TOURISM

In addition to wild life, the accommodation and conference sector play an important role in the tourism sector. Hotels range from budget, express, luxury and national parks where sleeping under the element is now possible. These establishments offer first class service together with computer, telecommunication and internet services.

ANALYSIS

HOSPITALITY & TOURISM INDUSTRY IN KENYA

Tourism in Kenya dates back to pre-independence days and as recorded in history as early as the 1930's (Tourism in Kenya). In the past, the bulk of the tourist that visited Kenya did so mainly to take part in the gaming industry in the game – hunting expeditions, while the other visitors represented the typical old tourist that travelled for sun, sand and sea which is one of the tourism products offered by Kenya's tourism industry. In particular, the tourism industry in Kenya traditionally attracted first world rulers. e. g. The <https://assignbuster.com/kenyan-hospitality-and-travel-industries/>

Queen of England, Queen Elizabeth II and the President of the United States of America, Theodore Roosevelt.

INFRASTRUCTURE

In the 1930s, Kenya's infrastructure was less than ideal or/and adequate to facilitate this new trend, tourism. Nevertheless, the tourism industry was steadily growing. Kenya gained independence in December 1963 (Kenya Timeline) after which the infrastructure developed a bit but still required improvements. The government with cooperation of both the public and private sector worked cohesively to fully develop the infrastructure that in turn made Kenya more attractive to tourists.

Approximately 10% of the country has been reserved for the preservation of the natural attractions and wildlife in Kenya which helps to boost tourism. (Tourism in Kenya) The tourism industry has evolved with the emergence of the new tourist, which brought along new forms of tourism for the country notably sports tourism, community and culture tourism etc. Eco tourism is the prevailing form of tourism accompanied by 10% of the natural reserve dedicated by the government.

Kenya Eco tourism attractions:-

Game viewing expeditions (Flora) -the evolution of the new tourist brought along the new game viewing expeditions, where the tourist no longer hunt the animals but view the animals on a Safari. Kenya's popular animal attractions are commonly called " the big five" which includes: elephant, rhino, lion, buffalo and the leopard (Tourism in Kenya)

Plant watching (Fauna) – The viewing of trees and flowers in Kenya is part of the Kenyan agricultural industry, which is the main contributor to the Kenyan GDP. Kenya climatic seasons are similar to those in the Caribbean with a dry and rain season annually. The rainy season in Kenya is responsible for the boom in the fauna of the country. This is the season where the trees and flowers bloom whereas the dry season is quite different. The trees drop their leaves and the flowers dry up. A tourist that visits Kenya in the dry season would have a different experience to a tourist that visit in the rainy season in regards to the country fauna.

Safari – this allows the tourists to observe and understand the native people and their natural lifestyle.

ECONOMICAL FACTORS

Multiplier Effect – Kenya’s tourism industry is heavily dependent on other industries to be a successful industry. The tourism industry is mainly dependent on the agriculture industry. This sector is predominantly responsible for providing the food and beverages that are served to the tourists.

NEGATIVE FACTORS AFFECTING THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

Lacks of awareness of the people – The people of Kenya are included in the decision making process or informed about tourism development initiatives. As a result of this, nationals act negatively towards the tourist.

Socio-culturally – With the improvement in the tourism industry and the influx of tourist into country, the ways and attitudes of the new world, have
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negatively affected the culture Kenya by the increase of prostitution, lack of traditional rituals and performances.

Terrorism Threat – The bombing of the US Embassy in 1998 and attempted bombing in Mombasa 2002, prompted countries to issue negative travel advisories which greatly affected the tourist arrivals to Kenya as depicted in the statistical data.

Kenya is a country with a diverse range of tourism products that cater to many types of tourism as mentioned previously. The country is heavily focused on maintaining its natural aspect as well as developing in a sustainable manner keeping with its eco tourism trend as it foremost tourism product. Overall the tourism industry is slowly increasing despite the negative factors that are occasionally experienced; they were able to press forward.

IDENTIFICATION & DISCUSSION OF TERRORISM IN KENYA

WHAT IS TERRORISM?

According to the U. S. Department of State terrorism is “ premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience.” Likewise, international terrorism is defined as “ terrorism involving citizens or the territory of more than one country.” ()

TERRORISTS ATTACKS IN KENYA

US EMBASSY ATTACK

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Around 10. 30am on August 7th, 1998, Kenya's US Embassy in Nairobi, was bombed by terrorists where an estimated 12 Americans and 227 Kenyans were killed. Approximately 5000 people in the vicinity at the time of the blast were injured. The destruction spanned a two to three block radius and the Al Qaeda terrorist group were the suspects behind the incident.

MOMBASSA ATTACK

The Al Qaeda terrorist group again launched another attack in Kenya this time at an Israeli – owned hotel. About 8. 30am on November 28, 2002, 2 Israelis and 12 Kenyans were killed and over 80 people were injured in the bombing of the Paradise hotel in Mombasa. This attack was

only the first part as a missile attack on an Israeli aircraft was concurrently taking place however, this mission failed.

WHY DO TERRORISTS TARGET KENYA?

Geographic location, poverty and unstable neighbours are some key elements that have contributed to past terrorist attacks faced by Kenya.

Kenya's unique geographic location acts as a passageway from the Middle East and South Asia to East Africa and beyond. Therefore, Kenya had to cater for the many activities that would now exist because of this pathway so an extensive seaport was constructed as well as two international airports, one in Mombasa and one in Nairobi along with rail, road and communication infrastructure. With these additions, travel and entry into and around Kenya is quite easy and usually obscure due to its penetrable borders coupled with its surrounding neighbours and unmonitored coastline. In particular, the

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Arabs in Kenya that occupy the coastal areas are closely linked to the Arabs in the Middle East as they both share a common religion and language. This has made it quite convenient for terrorist to blend into the community. For these reasons, Kenya is a preferred choice for terrorist to strike.

Due to poverty and the high rate of unemployment that exists in Kenya, the youths are targeted by terrorists for recruitment to carry out their activities. The terrorists are able to lure these young people by giving them money to join their cause. In this way, they gain new recruits who would provide them with the relevant local information needed to proceed with their activities. Again, Kenya is seen as an ideal destination for terrorists to attack.

In Somalia, Kenya's neighbouring country, political instability is quite prevalent. For the past 14 years, Somalia has not been run by a government and this has given way to terrorists to move across the border. This has therefore hampered Kenya's security. Immigrants from Somalia reside in Kenya making it easier for terrorists to blend in and thereby bring terrorism into Kenya.

Another challenge for Kenya is its ties to the US which make them susceptible to terrorists' attacks. Kenya, among other countries, has been selected by the United States Agency for International Development to be provided with the necessary resources to fight HIV/AIDS. () Also, the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention located in Kenya is the

TERRORISM’S IMPACT ON THE HOSPITALITY & TOURISM INDUSTRY IN KENYA

Tourism, one of the foundation blocks of Kenya’s economy, constitutes 25% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and has been adversely affected by the repercussions of terrorism.

Firstly, the influx of tourist to Kenya can be estimated to over 500, 000 visitors each year. Europe and the United States of America (USA) represent Kenya’s traveller generating region with 70% of the market being Europeans (Switzerland, Italy, Belgium France and Britain account for the bulk of tourists). In addition, visitors come from Japan, Asia, Scandinavia, and other African countries.

USA, Germany, Great Britain and some other countries, upon receiving the news about the terrorist attacks on Kenya’s US Embassy in Nairobi, immediately issued travel advisories to their citizens and imposed travel bans to refrain travel to Kenya as it was deemed unsafe. Moreover, the extensive media coverage of the attacks particularly focused on Kenya’s vulnerability to terrorism severely tarnished its image. These responses lead to a decline in travel to Kenya and some neighboring countries as travelers feared the spillover of the terrorist attacks. For example, tourism businesses were terribly affected by the travel warnings. Tourism brought in US \$500 million in annual revenue and was losing at least \$1 million everyday due to the decline in tourism. () Consequently, Kenya’s tourism industry was paralyzed.

Kenya suffered a decrease in tourist arrivals. This had a ripple effect on all sectors of the industry. The cancellation of leisure trips and business conferences were rapidly on the rise. Kenya's reputation plummeted and this led to the loss of its competitive value. Kenya was no longer an option to be considered for vacation or investment. Tourism catered to the employment of 500,000 Kenyans ranging from tour operators, tour guides, travel agencies, safari driver, dancers, hoteliers, restaurateurs, small business operators to airport and airline personnel. Subsequently, there was a significant increase in unemployment as many Kenyans lost their jobs. Employees that were still employed received salary cuts. For instance, at the Carnivore restaurant; all of the 330 staff had their salaries reduced, including Dunford the chairman (National Geographic 2010).

The bombing of the US Embassy had a massive impact on Kenya's infrastructure. The Embassy was stationed at the crossroads of two streets in Nairobi, adjacent to the Ufundi Building and the Co-op Bank Building. The explosion destroyed these three buildings and other buildings and amenities within a two to three block radius. () The rubble consisted of broken glass from windows, window frames, furniture and fixtures, concrete block walls, cars, buses, electric poles, street lights and the list goes on. The transportation sector within Kenya suffered major setbacks as the streets were seriously damaged and likewise vehicles. Additional problems surfaced as resources (medical) were delayed as it was difficult to get in and around Nairobi. Access was restricted to rescue and emergency personnel. Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, was known for its many tourist attractions but these business operations declined as a result of the bombing. With the loss of

power and telecommunication, tour operators, travel agencies and hotels were unable to update their websites or communicate with potential visitors who would usually book their reservations, tours or tickets online.

Another hindrance to Kenya's tourism industry in light of the terrorist attacks is the slump in foreign direct investment (FDI). Investors were inclined to nullify their FDI in Kenya due to some of the 'shocks' felt by the terrorist attack such as the direct destruction of infrastructure, the rise of operating costs due to an increasing need of security measures, and the rise of recruiting costs due to missing incentives to work in terrorism-prone regions. (). This further contributed to the loss of revenue specifically for tourism development initiatives.

An important issue on the agenda of Kenya's government to combat terrorism is now the introduction of more security. The notion about safety is not confined to the citizens of Kenya alone but is extended to the tourist as well. For this purpose, government spending had to be diverted from productive investment designed to promote growth, eradicate poverty and sustain tourism development. () Expenditure on high tech security equipment such as surveillance cameras, metal detectors and screening machines had to be implemented as strategies to counteract terrorism.

Kenya's financial costs continued to escalate in aftermath of the terrorist attack as more funding was required for the cleanup, restoration and reconstruction of the infrastructure, buildings and other amenities destroyed in the blast including tourists' facilities. As an illustration,

Similarly, another expense incurred is that of extensive advertising to attract more and new tourists to Kenya. This strategy was employed to portray Kenya as a once again safe place and to neutralize the negative media attention received after the bombing.

Apart from the above mentioned negative effects of terrorism on Kenya's tourism industry, some positive effects were identified. With the decrease in tourist arrivals to Kenya, domestic tourism was being promoted. Locals provided a portion of revenue needed to sustain some tourism businesses. Likewise, a new 'must see' tourist attraction was developed. The August 7th Memorial Park was constructed on the site where the US Embassy was once situated. This memorial was built to commemorate the lives that were lost and represents a tribute to the courage of the several thousand others who have had to cope with permanent injury and/or the loss of loved ones. It is a place where people come to reflect, remember and relax. () This attraction is quite similar to the September 11 attraction 'Ground Zero' which has been included in many tour packages offered by tour companies in New York City.

With regard to the Kenya's transit route region, terrorism is no exception. The negative effects of US embassy bombing trickled down to the airline industry. Flight cancellations increased as airline travel declined. There were numerous staff cuts and a major loss of revenue for the industry. For instance, the suspension of British Airways regular and charter planes flying to Nairobi, coupled with travel advisories, closed down access to 90% of Kenya's overseas markets (The Effect of Terrorism 2004). Car rental companies were also affected.

KENYA’S RESPONSE TO TERRORISM

There is a need for the development of an anti-terrorism legislation in Kenya: following the 1998 bombing of the US Embassy in Kenya the government recognized that there were no adequate measures in place to deal with such acts and therefore the need to develop and implement legislation to deal with terrorism was essential. According to Kenya’s Counter Terrorism committee, the Government on two occasions made attempts to implement such laws with the ‘ Suppression of Terrorism Bill’ in 2003 and the ‘ Anti-Terrorism Bill in 2006 respectively. However, both bills failed to be introduced to parliament. (Google 2010)

Another point to be considered is the need for revamped management policies to be set in place for Kenya’s border line and costal security control. Google 2010 also stated that the need for heightened security is vital in these areas, for example: the border between Kenya and Somalia poses a great threat to Kenyan nationals and tourist due to fact that Somalia has been without a government of over fourteen years and is known to be politically unstable. This can be done by putting measures in place such as; heightened security checks for persons entering Kenya through Somalia, denial of entry for suspicious entrants and denial to unnecessary travellers especially during the peak tourist seasons. Proper execution of security in these areas may allow tourists’ to feel safer and therefore increase overall visits to Kenya.

The tourism board of Kenya could try to mitigate some of the negative impacts of the past terrorism attacks on the country by creating a new image for the destination. In order to effectively do this, Kenya’s perspective

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about tourism has to be more holistic. For instance with respect to community tourism, the Maasai Mara tribe not only protects the environment but they engage in certain practices to reduce harm to the environment. Though terrorism would ultimately have a devastating impact on any country being affected, repositioning Kenya in the minds of tourists by focusing on the positives of the destination rather than the negative aspects of terrorism can aid in the process of moving forward. In addition, the tourism board can also shift some of their attention to local tourist by creating special packages in such a way that would be attractive to the local population.

Another option to combat this issue of terrorism in Kenya should be the development of crisis management portfolio. This would first of all distinguish terrorism from other forms of crisis. It should then outline in detail the measures that should be implemented before and after such a crisis. Next the portfolio should assist in painting a clear and clutter free process that should be followed after an act of terrorism to facilitate a timely recovery for Kenya's image. Since terrorism severely tarnished the image of Kenya, it is very crucial that only specific and highly qualified individuals should address the public and media issues. Hence the reason, the portfolio should also outline all individuals that should be involved in this process with clearly defined roles and objectives.

CASE STUDY

SEPTEMBER 11 AND KENYA BOMBINGS

Both the September 11 attacks on the United States and the US Embassy and Mombasa bombings in 1998 and 2002 respectively were carried out by the Al – Qaeda terrorist organization.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS

Both the US and Kenya bombings resulted in a decline in outbound and inbound travel.

The airline industry in both countries experienced significant revenue losses following the decline in travel.

Businesses that were dependent on tourism as their main source of revenue suffered and were unable to continue operations.

Staff cuts were also experienced again due to the decrease in travel because of the acts of terrorism faced by both countries.

POSITIVE EFFECTS

Both countries introduced new high tech security equipment and measures to combat the threat of terrorism.

Both countries were able to develop a new tourist attraction, Ground Zero and August 7th Memorial